

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----095279 161008Z /11

P 160915Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8390
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION USUN

S E C R E D SECTION 1 OF 2 DAMASCUS 3442

EXDIS

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, GW, SY
SUBJ: VISIT OF FONMIN KHADDAM TO WEST GERMANY

SUMMARY: DURING EARLY JUNE VISIT TO WEST GERMANY, FONMIN
KHADDAM HEARD STRONG DEFENSE OF SADAT INITIATIVE, FRG
SUPPORT FOR US MIDDLE EAST PEACE EFFORTS AND THE OPPOSITION TO
LIBYA'S ASSISTANCE TO INTERNATIONAL TERRORISTS. KHADDAM
FOR HIS PART PROCLAIMED SYRIA'S INDEPENDENCE OF SOVIET
AND EASTERN EUROPEAN INFLUENCE AND ITS DESIRE TO BUILD
STRONGER TIES WITH FRG AND SEE IT TAKE MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN
PEACE PROCESS. PRESIDENT ASSAD WILL VISIT

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BONN IN SEPTEMBER. END SUMMARY

1. FRG AMBASSADOR PECKERT REVIEWED RESULTS OF FONMIN
KHADDAM'S 5-DAY VISIT TO WEST GERMANY WITH CHARGE
JUNE 15. HE SAID KHADDAM HAS OPENED HIS MEETINGS WITH
BOTH CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT AND FONMIN GENSCHER WITH STRONG
STATEMENT OF SYRIAN INDEPENDENCE FROM SOVIET UNION AND

EASTERN BLOC, INSISTENCE ON TAKING ITS OWN DECISIONS BASED ON SYRIAN NATIONAL INTERESTS AND DESIRE TO STRENGTHEN RELATIONS WITH WESTERN EUROPE. (PECKERT SAID THAT ACCORDING TO MFA WESTERN EUROPEAN DIRECTOR JUEJATI, WHO ACCOMPANIED KHADDAM, BOTH SOVIET UNION AND EAST GERMANY HAD ATTEMPTED TO DISSUADE KHADDAM FROM VISITING BONN.)

2. KHADDAM TOLD FRG THAT SADAT WOULD HAVE TO END HIS SEPARATE INITIATIVE BEFORE SYRIAN/EGYPTIAN RECONCILIATION COULD BE ACHIEVED. KHADDAM SAID SADAT HAD TOLD ASSAD HE WOULD RESIGN IF HIS INITIATIVE FAILED, AND SYRIA BELIEVED SUCH AN ACT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE. HOWEVER, IT WAS UP TO THE EGYPTIAN PEOPLE AND NOT SYRIA TO DECIDE WHAT THEY WANTED TO DO ABOUT SADAT. PECKERT SAID CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT HAD VIGOROUSLY DISAGREED WITH KHADDAM, POINTING OUT THAT SADAT REPRESENTED AN ELEMENT OF STABILITY IN THE ARAB WORLD AND THAT FRG SUPPORTED HIS INITIATIVE. SCHMIDT ATTRIBUTED PRESIDENT CARTER'S SUCCESS IN HIS MIDDLE EAST AIRCRAFT PACKAGE TO POSITIVE IMPACT SADAT'S INITIATIVE HAD HAD ON AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION. IT WOULD ALLOW USG TO FOLLOW BALANCED POLICY TOWARDS MIDDLE EAST AND US WOULD HAVE FRG'S SUPPORT. KHADDAM, IN REPLY, SPOKE HIGHLY OF PRESIDENT CARTER AND PARTICULARLY OF SECRETARY VANCE WHOSE SINCERITY HAD MADE STRONG IMPRESSION ON THE SYRIANS.

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3. SCHMIDT HAD ALSO ASKED KHADDAM WHETHER SYRIA HAD ANY DIRECT COMMUNICATION WITH EGYPT IN THEIR CURRENT STATE OF DISAGREEMENT. WHEN KHADDAM REPLIED IN THE NEGATIVE SCHMIDT HAD STRONGLY URGED HIM TO ESTABLISH SUCH A CHANNEL AND OFFERED FRG ASSISTANCE IF IT WERE DESIRED.

4. ON LEBANON, KHADDAM HAD TOLD FRG THAT SYRIAN ADF FORCES WOULD NOT MOVE SOUTHWARD TO OCCUPY THE 36 KILOMETER ZONE (SIC) BETWEEN THEIR CURRENT LINES AND THE LITANI BECAUSE SYRIA WISHED TO AVOID ANY POSSIBLE PROVOCATION OF ISRAEL. KHADDAM DID SAY, HOWEVER, THAT ADF INTENDED TO TAKE A TOUGHER LINE TOWARDS MAINTAINING ORDER IN LEBANON. HE SAID THAT FUTURE CEASE FIRE VIOLATIONS BY ANY PARTY WOULD BE QUELLED BY FORCE BECAUSE MANY LEBANESE HAD NOT YET LEARNED CEASE FIRE WAS IN THEIR OWN INTERESTS.

5. CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT HAD SPOKEN STRONGLY AGAINST LIBYAN SUPPORT FOR INTERNATIONAL TERRORIST GROUPS. KHADDAM HAD AGREED WITH HIM AND SAID THAT LIBYA WAS A PROBLEM FOR ALL THE ARAB COUNTRIES, SYRIA INCLUDED.

6. SCHMIDT HAD NOTED THAT PM BEGIN APPEARED MORE INFLEXIBLE THAN MANY ISRAELIS REGARDING PEACE NEGOTIATIONS. WHAT HE ASKED, WAS SYRIA DOING TO ENCOURAGE MORE MODERATE GOVERNMENT IN ISRAEL? WHEN KHADDAM REPLIED THAT ALL ISRAELI LEADERS WERE ALIKE, SCHMIDT STRONGLY DISAGREED AND URGED SYRIA TO THINK ABOUT HOW IT COULD ENCOURAGE A MORE FLEXIBLE LEADERSHIP TO EMERGE IN ISRAEL. (PECKERT HERE REQUESTED WE STRICTLY PROTECT SCHMIDT'S PERSONAL VIEWS OF BEGIN.) SCHMIDT HAD ALSO DESCRIBED AT SOME LENGTH DISASTROUS EFFECT ANOTHER ME WAR COULD HAVE ON ALL NATIONS.

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ACTION SS-25

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7. FOLLOWING SAME LINE, FONMIN GENSCHER ASKED KHADDAM WHETHER THERE WERE ANY MESSAGES WHICH HE COULD TRANSMIT TO GOI ON BEHALF OF SARG DURING HIS FORTHCOMING TRIP TO ISRAEL WHEN KHADDAM HAD REPLIED "NO," GENSCHER REPHRASED QUESTION ASKING WHAT SYRIA WOULD MOST LIKE TO SEE FROM ISRAEL IN TERMS OF AN INITIAL GESTURE TOWARDS REOPENING PEACE TALKS. KHADDAM REPLIED THAT SYRIA WOULD WELCOME

STATEMENT BY ISRAELI LEADERSHIP THAT ISRAEL GENUINELY WANTED
PEACE--A PEACE BASED ON UN RESOLUTIONS. EVEN MORE WELCOME
WOULD BE AN ISRAELI STATEMENT RECOGNIZING THAT RESOLUTION
OF THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION WAS A CENTRAL ELEMENT TO
PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. WHILE NOT SPECIFICALLY TAKING
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UP GENSCHER'S OFFER TO DELIVER A MESSAGE, KHADDAM SAID
SYRIA WOULD WELCOME MORE ACTIVE WEST GERMAN ROLE IN
THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS PARTICULARLY SINCE WEST
GERMANY WOULD NOT HAVE THE SAME ULTERIOR MOTIVES AS THE
UNITED STATES, THE SOVIET UNION, FRANCE OR GREAT BRITIAN.

8. KHADDAM CONFIRMED TO FRG THAT PRESIDENT ASSAD
ACCEPTED IN PRINCIPLE INVITATION TO VISIT WEST GERMANY
IN SEPTEMBER BUT EXACT DATES REMAIN TO BE WORKED OUT.
IN ACCOMPANYING DISCUSSION REGARDING FRG ASSISTANCE TO
SYRIA, WEST GERMAN LEADERS SAID THEY HOPED SLOW SYRIAN
UTILIZATION RATE OF ASSISTANCE ALREADY EXTENDED WOULD BE
IMPROVED BY THE TIME OF ASSAD VISIT AND ALSO EXPRESSED
READINESS TO CONSIDER FINANCING "A PROJECT OF MAJOR
IMPORTANCE" IN SYRIA. PECKERT SAID KHADDAM HAD NOT
RAISED SUBJECT OF NUCLEAR ENERGY COOPERATION.

9. COMMENT: WEST GERMAN POSITIONS AS DESCRIBED BY
PECKERT APPEAR VERY CLOSE TO THOSE OF US IN EVERY RESPECT.
ASSUMING TALKS DID INDEED TAKE ABOVE-DWSCRIBED COURSE,
THEY SHOULD HAVE HAD CONSTRUCTIVE IMPACT ON CURRENT
SYRIAN THINKING TOWARDS MIDDLE EAST DEVELOPMENTS.
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